

WSCF Press Release

For immediate release: March 26, 2006

## 2ND ANNUAL WISCOSNIN ALL-GIRLS CHESS TOURNAMENT TO BE HELD AT UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MILWAUKEE

Seventeen-year-old Taylor Walls is a relative rarity in Wisconsin: a female high school student who loves chess. “I think the reason more girls don’t play is because there aren’t a lot of good female role models,” said the Milwaukee Rufus King High School senior. Taylor, however, is on track to become one herself. Her current goal: to defend her title next month at the 2nd Annual Wisconsin All-Girls Chess Tournament sponsored by the Wisconsin Scholastic Chess Federation and University School of Milwaukee.

The event will be held Saturday, April 21, at University School, 2100 W. Fairy Chasm Rd., Milwaukee. It is open to all Wisconsin girls in kindergarten through grade 12.

The Fourth Annual All-Girls Open National Championships were held over St. Patrick’s Day weekend in Chicago. That event drew 136 girls. Many more were expected to play, but a snowstorm that swept through the northeast kept a third of the field at home.

Taylor, who has been playing chess since she was six years old, is a member of Rufus King’s chess team. She also played her way through Milwaukee’s Samuel Morse Middle School. “It’s so interesting,” she said of chess. “Every game is different.”



*Taylor Walls at the 2006 USCF High School National Championships*



Stephanie Sager, a fifth-grader at Whitefish Bay’s Cumberland Elementary School, is also participating in the tournament.

Stephanie, 10, has been playing chess for two years.

She says she likes chess because it’s fun and helps her in school. “Chess helps you concentrate more and think ahead, and that’s mostly what you have to do in life, too,” she said.

Stephanie said that although girls play chess when they’re young, she has noticed that many drop out as they get older. “They would rather try out for cheerleading or sing than to go to chess tournaments,” she said. “And some might get intimidated by the all the boys.”

*Stephanie Sager*

To them, Stephanie says, “Don’t worry about it. We’re equal to boys.”

In fact, when it comes to chess, she’s beaten lots of boys. “Sometimes, boys think they’re going to beat me because I’m a girl, and then I end up beating them and they get this weird look on their faces,” she said.

Taylor and Stephanie’s interest in and dedication to chess is fairly unique. According to Bob Patterson-Sumwalt, president and founder of WSCF, scholastic-level chess, nationwide, is male-dominated by a ratio of almost nine to one. “We want to create an environment and opportunities that encourage more girls to play,” said Patterson-Sumwalt. “This event creates one of those opportunities.”

Last year’s WSCF’s All-Girls tournament attracted 20 players. Patterson-Sumwalt hopes to double, or even triple that number this year.



*Player's at last year's tournament*

The five-round Swiss, G30 format tournament will feature three divisions: K-3, K-6 and K-12. The entry fee is \$10 per player for advance, on-line registration ([www.wisconsinscholasticchess.org](http://www.wisconsinscholasticchess.org)) and \$15 for those who register the day of the tournament.

The deadline for advance registration is midnight, April 19. Check in is from 7:45 to 8:45 a.m., with the first round of playing beginning no later than 9:30 a.m. Players not checked in by 8:45 will begin play in Round 2. The awards ceremony will begin at approximately 4 p.m. Chess notation is encouraged for all participants, but is required for those playing in the K-12 division, and those in the K-5 division playing on boards 1-10 for all games lasting more than 30 minutes.

Team and individual trophies and medals will be awarded. The K-12 champion will receive a \$300 savings bond; the K-6 and K-3 champions will receive \$200 savings bonds. Participants should bring chessboards and chess clocks, if they have them. Chessboards and other chess items will be available for purchase at the tournament. Lunch will be also available for purchase on site.